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# PIONEER DAYS *in* ILLINOIS



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PIONEER DAYS IN ILLINOIS


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This collection of stories about Illinois has been selected from a large group of similar items that have been sent in past months to newspapers in the state as a part of the Project's information service. Editors and their readers have received them so cordially that a larger field of usefulness seemed to be open to them - supplementary reading for home study groups and schools.

*Curtis D. Mac Dougall*

State Supervisor



PART ONE

PIONEER DAYS IN ILLINOIS



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### PELTS FOR PAYMENTS

Wolves, opossums, raccoons, and other wild animals were so numerous and money so scarce during an early period in the development, of Illinois that pelts were frequently used by settlers as units of exchange. One pioneer of Jefferson County paid taxes at Mount Vernon with a wagon-box full of wolf skins, and on another occasion laid down a wolf skin in payment for a purchase at a grocery store. The proprietor gave him an opossum skin in change.

### PROMOTING THE FROG

A farm given over to the growing of select colonies of frogs attracts the attention of many tourists driving along State Highway 37 in Johnson County. The finest specimens of frogs are imported from Louisiana. A sheet iron fence keeps all the frisky tadpoles and frogs on home territory.

### WILD PIGEONS EXTINCT

Wild pigeons, which were at one time so abundant in Illinois that they were reported obscuring the sun near Chicago, are now extinct. Taxidermists value specimens highly, for only a few are to be found in collections. The owner of a noteworthy exhibit of over a thousand stuffed birds regards a wild pigeon shot in 1901 near Oakford as the most valuable single specimen in the group.



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### AN EARLY ILLINOIS SNAKE HUNT

Snakes were found in such large numbers in the vicinity of old Shiloh schoolhouse, Jefferson County, early in the development of the state, that parents feared the existence of a den of them. The little log schoolhouse was built in the fall of 1820. With the coming of warm spring sunshine the snakes appeared.

A holiday was declared for a snake hunt. Settlers turned out with clubs, axes, hoes, spades, and even guns. Snakes were found in every possible hiding place. The chief surprises occurred when large objects were moved, such as logs and big stones. Under these were found great clumps of snakes of various kinds, as yet too cold and stiff to move. Among the 516 snakes killed, rattlers were the most numerous.

Similar stories are told in Vermilion County. When lots were offered for sale in Danville on April 1, 1827, a fine spring day, so many rattlers came out of their winter quarters that the sale had to be postponed. On this occasion it is said that 75 snakes were killed, some of them six feet long.





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### THREE UNUSUAL CELEBRATIONS

An annual "Mule Day" is one of the many interesting special celebrations held in various regions of Illinois. Especially fine mules are raised in White and Hamilton counties, and "Mule Day" is observed the first Saturday in October at Enfield.

A folk festival, as well as a corn show, at Hallowe'en time is the big event of each year at Mount Carmel, Wabash County. Several blocks of Market Street are roped off for a week. A pet parade and masked costume contest are featured. Some of the exhibits of garden and farm products, needle work, canned goods, and baked goods are shown in store windows and on counters, for the business men of the town are the promoters of the show.

Reminiscent of merry old England is the Fox Chasers' Reunion held in Bell's Woods, east of Keensburg, Wabash County, for three days each October. Foxes are still numerous in Wabash County, and fox chasers from far and near come with their dogs. Some of them camp on the ground, and others find accommodations in Keensburg and Mount Carmel. Only fox hounds and tree dogs are allowed to compete in the fox hunting events, but there are other opportunities for competition and entertainment, such as a daylight race and a night race for pups, a day and a night race for all dogs, a bench show for all classes, free shows, band and vocal music, and public speaking.



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### "APPLE KINGDOM" ALMOST AN ISLAND

Calhoun County in Illinois is nearly surrounded by water. The Mississippi marks its western and southern limits, and the Illinois flows along its eastern boundary. On these great waterways and well maintained roads, all traffic moves, for not a railroad crosses its borders.

In this narrow area, grows about one-third of the state's apple crop, which is sold principally to wholesale buyers from St. Louis, New York, and Chicago long before harvest. Orchards are commonly of 75 to 150 acres each. The beauty of the trees in bloom and in fruit draws visitors from long distances.

Most place-names of this "apple kingdom" reflect the varied character of its surface, and the native homes or names of early settlers: for example, Cliff Dale, Deer Plain, Baytown, Silver Creek, Golden Eagle, Belleview, Beechville, Gilead, Betchtown, Kampsville, Hardin, Brussels, and Hamburg.

A ridge extending nearly the entire length of the county provides sheltering slopes, moisture for fruits and grains, and picturesque settings for pleasant farms and towns.



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### BELIEF IN WITCHCRAFT RECALLED

Belief in the power of witches existed in Illinois less than two generations ago. A Danville man recalls that a farmer who found the mane of his horse badly tangled would usually exclaim, "The witches have been riding you!"

Research in records has yielded information about a famous witch supposed to have been at work in Williamson County about 1835. She was thought to be in league with Satan to cast spells and to utter curses on both men and beasts. Associated with this belief was another one that showed faith in the ways of a protecting spirit which could control the witch by shooting a picture of her with a silver bullet.

### RETAIN TRADITIONS OF THE SQUARE DANCE

In the little German settlement of Burnt Hill, Hamilton County, Illinois, the young people go through steps of square dances exactly as did their grandparents. Since a large number of the residents play dance tunes well, music for the merry gatherings is gladly provided without charge.



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### HISTORIC HOTELS IN ILLINOIS

Most hotels a century old in Illinois have had as guests men and women who helped to make history in this and other countries.

In 1825, the Rawlings hotel, still doing business in Shawneetown, Gallatin County, entertained the Marquis de LaFayette, on the memorable occasion of his visit to America on Congressional invitation. The 68-year old general was traveling up the Ohio River to Pittsburgh, and accounts of the time describe a "splendid banquet" in his honor at the Rawlings. In the course of the festivities, LaFayette looked up from his table and recognized a face peering at him through a window as that of a man who had been a member of his bodyguard during the Revolution, and who saved his life on one occasion. The general rose from his seat, commanded that the outsider, who was aged and unkempt, be brought in, LaFayette embraced him and gave him a seat at the table.

The Mermaid Inn of Lebanon, St. Clair County, another historic structure, was built in 1830 by Lyman Adams, a retired sea captain. The building, which has been changed many times, is now being used as a residence at 112 East St. Louis Street, on U. S. Highway No. 50. Charles Dickens, English novelist, is said to have compared the old Mermaid favorably with "any village alehouse of a homely kind in England."

The old Ross hotel at Havana, completed in 1833, and no longer standing, provided space not only for lodging but also for courtrooms, judges' chambers, jury room, and a general store. Fishing, hunting, and Indians were the topics of conversation during many a hilarious evening around the big fireplace on trial days in the 'fifties, with such men as Abraham Lincoln, Edward Baker, H. M. Weed, W. C. Goudy, and J. Boice taking turns at story telling.





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### THE STORY OF "INDIAN ELM"

The history of Illinois is rich in stories about Indians. These as well as others, which frequently relate obscure tragedies of pioneer life, seem to be at least partly legendary in character.

Among the unusually interesting narratives is one summarized in the Pocahontas News Patriot. On the high ground, just north of old Greene Cemetery in Bond County, early settlers constructed a fort. One summer morning, two sisters went for water to a nearby spring on the edge of the forest. As they were about to return, one of them was killed by a bullet. The other reached the fort safely.

The body of the dead girl was not brought back immediately because of fear that Indians were hidden by the trees. Toward evening, one of the pioneers saw a movement among the branches of a large elm near the spring. He shot, and an Indian fell to the ground, dead.

Recently, the tree, which had become a landmark known as the "Indian Elm," was cut down, and in a hollow limb the head of a tomahawk was found.



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### THE FIRST CIVIL WAR MONUMENT

Almost every community in Illinois has a monument commemorating its citizens who lost their lives in the Civil War. Probably the oldest of the Civil War monuments is that at Byron, which stands at the intersection of Chestnut and Second Streets. This monument was erected during the year following the end of the war. Time has blurred the names on the stone shaft. The inscription reads:

In memory of the Patriotic Boys of Byron  
Who Fell in Subduing the Great Rebellion --  
1861-65

The city of Byron, which has a mayor and councilmen, although its population is only 915, was settled mainly by New Englanders. They brought their abolition sentiment with them and made Byron a center for anti-slavery activities. It was quite natural, therefore, that Byron should have been among the first to honor its Civil War Dead.

### FAMOUS, UNVARYING SPRINGS

Of especial interest to scientists are the Twin Springs in Twin Springs Park, Clinton, Illinois, De Witt County, from which 120,000 gallons of pure, slightly mineral water flow every twenty-four hours, without varying a gallon an hour. These springs are beautifully situated, feeding a 25-acre lake and forming a cataract 20 feet high. The lake provides swimming, boating, and fishing.



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### UNKNOWN SOLDIER FINDS HOSPITALITY

After lights had been extinguished in most of the homes at Saybrook, McLean County, one rainy night in October, 1863, a quivering young soldier in Union blue knocked at the door of a cottage near the edge of town. According to an early narrative the stranger, too exhausted to speak, was put to bed and in the morning was found dead. Continued efforts to learn his identity failed. A mound in the local cemetery is still pointed out as the grave of Saybrook's unknown soldier.

### JOLIET DEVELOPS ITS ARBORETUM

In addition to seventy-five kinds of trees that are native to the Pilcher Park Arboretum in Joliet, many others, such as magnolia, sweet gum, cypress, pecan, black birch, and black cherry, were imported by John Higginbotham, the original owner of the tract of land, 327 acres in extent. Plans for the development of the area include importing trees from all over the world.

This tract, formerly called the Forest of Arden, was presented to the people of Joliet by Robert Pilcher in 1922 with the stipulation that it should remain in its natural state. Just across Hickory Creek from the Arboretum is a five-acre picnic camp, which is connected with the main park by a foot-bridge. A flowing well fed from Lake Michigan is one of the features of the area.



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### EARLY SETTLERS FIGHT PRAIRIE BANDITS

Before the days of effective enforcement of law throughout Illinois, prairie bandits sometimes met with quick punishment by early settlers. Two markers give evidence of the activity of bandits in the Rock River Valley and of the means used to combat the outlaws.

In White Rock Cemetery at Kings, Ogle County, the inscription on a granite boulder reads: "John Campbell, assassinated by prairie bandits in June, 1841. His life was sacrificed for law and order." Another boulder, on a nearby farm, has inscribed on it: "J. Campbell, captain of the Regulators, shot here by prairie bandits, June 28, 1841."

According to accounts, the presence of outlaws in Ogle, Lee, Whiteside, and Winnebago counties about 1840 caused the settlers to form a company of Regulators, with John Campbell of Ogle County as captain. The first move of this group, it is said, resulted in the capture and the whipping of a number of the bandits, who shortly retaliated by slaying Campbell. Accounts further relate that the Regulators captured the suspected slayers and executed two of them after conviction by a jury of 111 men.

William Cullen Bryant visited northern Illinois in the summer of 1841, and in Letters of a Traveller mentions the boldness of outlaws in the burning of the county courthouse at Oregon City, as well as the organizing of the Regulators to combat them.





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### HORSES WERE HORSES IN THOSE DAYS

A 40-mile horse race for a purse of \$400 is one of the remarkable events in the history of sports in Illinois. This race occurred on September 10, 1855. The course was from Jerseyville to Alton and return. Conditions of the race were as follows: "The terms of the race are to get into any shape the owners think best, whether in carriage or under saddle, and no withdrawal of the stakes under any circumstances, except the death of either of the animals." The newspaper writer who reported the affair in the Chicago Weekly Democrat properly referred to it as "a test of bottom." He added self-righteously, "We have but little relish for such brutal sport."

### FOUGHT WITH NAPOLEON; BURIED IN ILLINOIS

Among ten tombstones with French inscriptions that are still standing in a little known century-old cemetery in Tazewell County is one marking the grave of Jean Pierre Mougcon, who died in 1852. He was a soldier in the ill-fated army of Napoleon that marched on Moscow in 1812.



ILLINOIS TOWNS THAT MOVED

Several instances of Illinois towns that moved from one site to another have been noted by historians. Commercial advantages usually led to the changes, most of which occurred during the years of rapid industrial development. Unique, however, is the case of Shawneetown, which is giving up its once commercially strategic location because of the hazard of floods.

Founded early in the nineteenth century, Shawneetown was the rough-hewn portal to the Middle Border, financial center and land office for a vast territory, rendezvous of settlers, soldiers, explorers, and rivermen, and host to such notables as LaFayette and Charles Dickens. Its early economic advantage lay almost wholly in its strategic site on the banks of the Ohio, an advantage that more than offset the ravages of annual floods. After the unusually severe flood of 1884, a comprehensive levee system was constructed. However, in 1898 and 1913 the Ohio surged over the levees, and in 1932 they were raised five feet above the 1913 high-water mark. Shawneetown, however, had not envisioned a flood of the magnitude of that of January, 1937, which filled the cup-like townsite, and rose six feet above the protecting walls. Inhabitants were evacuated by a river packet and several motor-boats shortly before the water began to pour into the streets.

The receding flood marked the end of the city's struggle to remain on the water front, a position no longer of sufficient advantage to warrant risk of future inundations. With the aid of the state, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, and the W.P.A., plans were made to move Shawneetown to the hills about four miles west of the river. The removal, it is estimated, will take two years. Some of the city's landmarks will be maintained in the State Park, which will be established accord-



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ing to present plans, on the old site.

Examples of communities moving for better commercial possibilities are Johnson City, about 50 miles west of Shawneetown, and Utica, near Starved Rock State Park.

Years ago, about a mile east of the proposed route of the Chicago, Paducah and Memphis railroad, now the Chicago & Eastern Illinois, was a town called Lake Creek. Its citizens desired the railroad line to pass through their community, but were persuaded that moving the town was easier than diverting the course of the railroad. For several months the dwellings and stores of the town were on rollers, moving from the old site to the new and doing business as usual. The community was renamed Johnston City, after Ben. F. and P. M. Johnston, brothers, who built the railroad through the region.

The original site of Utica, also known as North Utica, where once stood the Indian village at which Marquette established the first Indian mission in Illinois, was on the north bank of the Illinois River about a mile south of the present village. The community, which depended on the river trade for its prosperity, hoped to secure the western terminus of the proposed Illinois-Michigan Canal. After the terminus was finally located at Peru, and the canal built north of Utica, the village declined. In 1852, North Utica was established on the canal, and the old village abandoned.



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### WHITE HORSES ON PARADE

Thirty- six pairs of snow-white horses drew an enormous farm wagon in a spectacular parade held during the Republican campaign rally in the autumn of 1864 at Clinton, Illinois. On one of the horses of each group rode a boy dressed in Union colors. Each pair of animals symbolized the national unity for which the Civil War was still being fought.

### FRENCH-CANADIAN CUSTOM OBSERVED

A meal-time custom, believed to have its origin in French-Canadian homes, is regularly observed in several Illinois communities. The family stands at the table while the father blesses the food. After all have been seated, he cuts the bread and distributes it. In so doing, it is said, he symbolizes his patriarchal authority over the household. This ancient custom is reported as being observed in some homes of Irwin, Chebanse, St. Anne, Bradley, Bourbonnais, Mokence, St. George, and Manteno.

### UNUSUAL SOURCE OF WATER SUPPLY

The water supply of Taylorsville, Christian County, Illinois, which is noted for its purity, is pumped from a natural underground lake that has coal deposits for its base.





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### ILLINOIS MAN INVENTED GIGANTIC WHEEL

Illinois gave the Ferris Wheel to the world. A native son of Galesburg invented the wheel and directed its construction. It is still remembered by thousands of persons as a main attraction at the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893. George Washington Gale Ferris was a member of two pioneer families of Galesburg, descendants of which now reside in that city.

Notwithstanding the opinion of engineers who believed the wheel could not be operated even if it were built, Ferris found backers for his enterprise. The encouragement given by officials of steel companies who believed in the feasibility of the wheel was an important factor in carrying out the plans. It is said that officials of the Fair were amazed both when the wheel did operate, and when it returned a profit.

According to accounts, the total cost of the wheel was \$500,000, of which \$25,000 was spent on planning and \$12,000 on the wooden false work. The foundation, 40 feet deep, was laid in the winter months under serious handicaps. Because of the size of the job and the necessary haste, several steel plants divided the iron work. The pieces were so carefully checked for uniformity that they seemed to be the products of but one company. The giant axle weighed 70 tons.

The wheel, 270 feet in diameter, consisted of two huge rims with supporting spokes. Between these were suspended 36 cars, with seats for 40 persons in each one. As the wheel revolved, the cars reached a height of 258 feet, giving the passengers a fine view of the Exposition grounds, and a thrill to talk about when they returned to their homes.



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### RIVER TRAFFIC INCREASES RAPIDLY

The remarkably rapid growth of Illinois during the second quarter of the nineteenth century is reflected in the records of transportation on the Illinois River. Commercially important boats, for example, arrived and departed only occasionally in 1828 from the port of Havana. However, in 1836, the number leaped to 450. Some of the packets are described as being well constructed and rather expensive.

### EARLY SETTLERS AVOIDED PRAIRIES

Early settlers in Illinois generally avoided the open grass land of the prairies under the impression that the prairie was unhealthful. This seems to have been one of several factors that confined most of the first settlements to the wooded areas adjacent to streams. The timber provided logs for the cabins and rails for fences. It was also the source of fuel for the fire places, and of the game which was the most important item to be cooked there. The leaf mould of clearings in the timber was much easier to cultivate than the tough sod of the prairie. By 1840, however, the open land was no longer avoided.

### "TOWNS" ARE USUALLY VILLAGES IN ILLINOIS

Travelers in Illinois who use the word "town" to refer to almost any community not clearly large enough to be a city, are usually wrong. The state has only twenty-nine towns, officially. In addition to these, it has 836 villages and 267 cities.



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### "RING RIDIN'" WITH GALLOPING HORSES

"Ring Ridin'," at one time a popular contest during elaborate annual picnics held near Garrett, Douglas County, vigorously tested the horsemanship and nerves of entrants. Broken bones sometimes resulted, and after a particularly stormy contest in 1891, the game was discontinued.

As described by an old resident, "Ring Ridin'" consisted of placing a small spear through a metal-like disk about ten inches in circumference. The disk, which was suspended from a string and pulley attached to a pole far enough from the ground so that a rider on a galloping horse could pass under it, was raised or lowered at the will of some one standing nearby. The most skillful contestant was awarded the captaincy of the ring game for the following year.

### ROSES BY THE MILLION

Pana, Illinois, is frequently called "The City of Roses," for each year about 12,000,000 roses are grown there. The commercial production of them dates from 1920, when the first greenhouse was established. At present over 100 greenhouses with 2,000,000 square feet of glass are used for this colorful and fragrant crop.



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### "CENTURY MEN" OF BICYCLE DAYS

Back in the "gay nineties" most Illinois youths wished to own a bicycle, and many of them aspired to wear the gold bar awarded to "century men" by the League of American Wheelmen. A rider qualified as a "century man" if he covered 100 miles in thirteen hours with the addition of two one-half hour lunch periods. The average rate of speed was consequently better than seven miles per hour.

After the Capital City Cycling Club of Springfield, commonly known as the C.C.C.C., was organized in 1886, members who wanted to become "century men" would meet at 6 a.m. in Lincoln Square. Some would set out for Petersburg, some for Beardstown, and others for Decatur, as principal points on the routes. As each one arrived at his destination, he would be congratulated by the mayor, who would sign his credentials.

With good luck, a rider could complete the trip in ten hours, but persons riding "high wheelers" rarely were able to accomplish the feat because of poor roads.

### SOME ILLINOIS WAGES IN 1851

Wages of \$9.00 per month, with lodging but not board, for farm labor, and day wages of twenty-five to forty cents for planting corn were a part of the records found in an account book of a farmer of Lima Township, Adams County.





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### ISLAND CHANGED RIVER CHANNEL

Within the limits of East St. Louis, a section of land crossed by the Eads Bridge approach was once an island that changed the course of the mighty Mississippi River. It is now the site of warehouses and railroad terminals.

The island first appeared in the river as a small sand bar early in the nineteenth century. Seasonal flood deposits caused it rapidly to become a small island which diverted the channel of the Mississippi River from the Missouri to the Illinois side to such a degree that by 1830 the harbor of St. Louis was dangerously shallow. St. Louis, sensing the threat to its river commerce, appealed to Congress, which in 1836 appropriated funds for the construction of dikes to return the river channel to the Missouri shore.

Robert E. Lee, later commander of the Confederate Army, was engineer of the project. At his direction two dikes were extended from the north and south tips of the island in 1838. They caused the harbor at St. Louis to deepen and the channel on the Illinois side of the island to become ten feet shallower. Eventually, accretion joined the island, about a mile long and 500 yards wide, to the mainland.

### GHOST TOWN OF SLACKWATER

The old Slackwater covered bridge in Peoria County, marks the site of the once prosperous village of Slackwater, which no doubt hoped, as did most Illinois villages in the fifties, to become a great mid-western metropolis. When a railroad came through Duncan, across the county line to the north, Slackwater was soon added to the list of "ghost towns."



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### SKY BOUND ROADS

Roads that rise with amazing abruptness lure tourists across the high and picturesque hills of Williamstown Ridge in Shelby County. A great gravel pit near Cold Springs supplies most of the surfacing needed to keep highways open to automobile traffic under all ordinary weather conditions. This region, sometimes called "the foothills of the Illinois Ozarks," embraces 12 square miles of peaks, woods, strong springs, and fine farms.



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### OLD MILLS NOW LANDMARKS

Two Dutch windmills, their usefulness at an end, remain as picturesque landmarks in Du Page County. The Heideman Mill, a half mile north of U.S. Highway 20 on Mill Road, just north of Addison, was built in 1867 and continued in service until 1929. Its octagonal tower, 30 feet wide at the base and 15 feet at the top, supports a wheel with a 75-foot sail spread that reaches to within twenty feet of the ground.

An educational exhibit is a feature of the Ahlers Mill, in Mount Emblem Masonic Cemetery, Mt. Prospect Road. Except the mill stones, all the working parts of this fine old structure, built in 1850, are of wood and have been preserved almost without exception in their original form. It is most impressive at night, when lights play on its great sails.



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### "DEAR TEACHER - "

The Illinois schoolboy who resents having to show his teacher a written excuse from his parents every time he is absent from school may blame his great-great grandfather and his pals, who, it seems, stayed out of school so frequently in the 1850's that they jeopardized the continuance of the free public school system.

For a quarter of a century school authorities had to defend the free public school system against attacks from irate taxpayers. The objectors claimed that school funds were unnecessary since the schools were not appreciated and more than one-fourth of the pupils attended classes less than three months a year. In an effort to reduce the large number of absences, authorities in the East developed the written excuse procedure, which was first used in Illinois by Superintendent Wells of the Chicago public schools. In 1858 he made the following ruling:

"Every scholar in the grammar schools who shall be absent six half days in four consecutive weeks, and every scholar in the primary schools who shall be absent eight half days in four consecutive weeks, without an excuse from his parent or guardian, given either in person or by written note, satisfying the teacher that the absences were caused by his own sickness or by sickness in the family, shall forfeit his seat in school; and the teacher shall forthwith notify the parent and the Superintendent that the pupil is suspended."

The annual school report of 1859 showed that the ruling had reduced absences one half and that the average suspension was for only one day. However, some parents considered the rule unreasonable.





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### ILLINOIS NICKNAMES

"Sucker State" is perhaps the earliest of the several nicknames that have been given to Illinois. Its origin may probably be traced to the migrating habits of southerners from Missouri, Kentucky, Indiana, Virginia, and the Carolinas, who in the 1820's left their homes each year to prospect for lead mining claims in the vicinity of Galena.

Some of these southerners came overland in covered wagons drawn by mules or oxen, lived in wagon camps, and went home with the approach of cold weather. Others came up the river every spring in keelboats and returned downstream in the fall. These latter, particularly, were given the name "Sucker," because of the similarity of their yearly movements to those of the fish by that name, which migrated up and down the Mississippi seasonally. The frequency with which these claims proved worthless may have led to the later application of the name to people easily deceived.

Other nicknames for Illinois have obvious explanations, "Prairie State" is now commonly replacing "Sucker State." Occasionally "Corn State" is heard, and less well known is "Garden of the West."

### SALUTE TO THE IRON HORSE

On Monday, October 24, 1849, the people of Glenn Ellyn and Du Page County saw their first locomotive, which was making its initial run out of Chicago. On this first trip the engine had to stop at the Desplaines River to get more water and also to load fire wood.



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### LETTUCE RIPENED IN TIME

#### FOR CHRISTMAS DINNER

Home-grown lettuce that ripened late in December once garnished the Christmas table of one Illinois resident. On December 25, 1899, a subscriber to the Cambridge Chronicle in Henry County reported that he had gathered an abundance of fresh lettuce from his garden for the occasion, and that pea vines were already a foot and a half high.

### DESTINY PLAYS ROLE

#### AS ICE STOPS TRAVEL

Menacing ice in the Ohio River brought a physician to an Illinois pioneer community, and he remained there for the rest of his life.

Late in December of 1817, a flatboat, with lumber and a few passengers, found shelter in the harbor of Lusk Creek, off the Ohio River at Golconda. Among the persons aboard was a young Scotch physician, Dr. William Sim, educated at the Royal College of Surgeons in London and bound for Natchez, Mississippi to establish a practice.

When the flatboat resumed its way, Sim was not among the passengers. He had been persuaded to remain at least through the winter, and finally he decided to cast his lot with the settlers in that area. In time his calls took him long distances by horseback - as far as Metropolis on the south, Shawneetown to the north, Princeton, Kentucky, east, and Jonesboro, to the west.



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### BERRIES YIELD SUPPLY

#### OF BRIGHT BLUE INK

Illinois prairie lands yielded many necessities to pioneers, but a lone vine that provided filler for an Alton resident's ink-well is one of the unusual products on record. A magazine published in 1852 relates how the man found the strange vine growing in his gardens, and how he crushed the berries for ink.

So satisfactory was the writing fluid thus produced that he tried to find other vines of a similar kind, but to no avail. According to the account, specimens of penmanship, written with the berry ink, retained its "bright bluish color.

### SANTA CLAUS DEFENDED

#### ON EDUCATIONAL BASIS

"Down with Santa Claus!"

This, in effect, was the cry raised in 1894 by several women of one Illinois county. In that year a group of Cook County mothers tried to banish St. Nicholas and other mythological heroes of childhood on the contention they were a "gross offense" to the "scientifically ordered minds" of children.

However, one member of the group pleaded that such folklore had educational value. Her views were at once publicly supported on various other grounds, and the proposal for disillusionment was defeated.



PART TWO

FROM MULES TO LOTUS TIME





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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### FAMOUS HORSE AND MULE MARKET

More mules and horses are said to be marketed in Galesburg, Illinois, than in any other city of the nation. Besides selling many animals for use in eastern and southern states, dealers there have shipped thousands of them to Europe. At sales during each week of the year, buyers from almost every part of the country purchase over 17,000 head annually.

### EDUCATION ON THE MARCH

The University of Illinois gave early promise of becoming the great institution that it now is. Evidence of this was found in an item that appeared on May 20, 1892 in the Daily Globe, a Chicago newspaper of the time: "Twenty-five years have rolled away since the University of Illinois first opened the doors to its first class, consisting of seventy-five students. Since then it has grown until now it has nearly six hundred students."

Today the University has over 13,000 persons in its class rooms and has enrolled more than 120,000 students and granted over 45,000 degrees since it was founded in 1867. According to present plans for expansion, the University will be able to accommodate more than 30,000 students on the Urbana campus alone, a number almost equal to the combined 1930 census figures for Urbana and Champaign.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### A TOWN THAT BECAME A VILLAGE

Seven years before Bardolph, McDonough County, became an Illinois village in 1876, it was incorporated as a town. The change was made, it is said, to give persons living within the school district, but outside the incorporated limits, wider representation on the school board. Another unusual circumstance in the history of this community is the change of its name, which was originally Randolph. When it was discovered that another Illinois town had selected the same name, substitutions for two consonants resulted in Bardolph.

### CAVERN EXPLORERS FIND MYSTERY BOAT

A mystery boat on the shore of a subterranean lake in Pearl Township of Pike County, Illinois, remains a source of speculation for visitors. It was discovered in 1871 when excavations during the construction of a railroad brought to light the entrance to a series of caverns, the largest of which is about 100 feet high and 200 feet wide. Some passageways are so small that a person can pass through them only by crawling. In one of the rooms reached in this way is a lake of clear water and the abandoned boat.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### ANOTHER FAMOUS MOSS COVERED BUCKET

One of the forty wells still being used in Mackinaw is said to be the oldest well in Tazewell County and its water is highly valued locally for distinctive qualities that contribute to the brewing of exceptionally fine coffee and tea. Persons travel many blocks to secure it.

### FORTUNES FROM CLAM SHELLS

During the "Klondike Days" of the pearl industry in Illinois between 1905-1910, a six-mile clam bed at Pearl in Pike County gave employment to 600 persons and yielded a million dollars' worth of shells. They were sold to button and ornament manufacturers for \$15 to \$20 a ton.

### WOODEN SHOES IN ILLINOIS

Wooden shoes, once commonly used in and near New Baden, Illinois, are still in demand, especially by the older residents of Dutch descent. This type of footwear can be seen prominently displayed for sale at Albers in Clinton County.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### DEBT OF ILLINOIS TO NATHANIEL POPE

Chicago, Wisconsin!

Elgin, Waukegan, Rockford, Galena, Wisconsin!

These addresses are wrong, of course. However, they would probably be right today unless Nathaniel Pope of Kaskaskia, territorial delegate to Congress, had not succeeded in his arguments to amend the Enabling Act whereby Illinois could become a state.

The time was 120 years ago -- April 13, 1818

Through his vision and efforts, the northern boundary line of Illinois was placed, not at 41°30', as the bill originally provided, but, by amendment, at 42°30', or about 61 miles north of the southern shore line of Lake Michigan.

As a result of the change, Illinois gained approximately 8,500 square miles of land, or about one-seventh of its present area, which includes the nation's second largest city, a population of more than 4,600,000, hundreds of millions in wealth, and important commercial ports.

Pope, a Kentuckian by birth, died in 1850 after achieving a distinguished reputation as a judge of the United States District Court, and Pope County was named in his honor. His nephew, Daniel Pope Cook of Kaskaskia, also a Kentuckian, lived only to the age of 32, but so crowded his brief career with significant work that Cook County perpetuates his name.





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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### SETTLEMENT OF HENRY COUNTY

Henry County, established in 1825 and re-organized in 1836-37, when its present boundaries were fixed, was largely settled by colonies organized in the East. Weathersfield, now a part of the city of Kewanee, was founded by the Connecticut Association, a stock company. The first settler arrived in 1836, and three years later the colony numbered 100.

Early in the 1830's, about 30,000 acres were occupied by colonists from the East who settled Andover. Morristown, the first county seat and now extinct, was part of 20,000 acres of land purchased by a New York Colony west of the present village of Cambridge.

In 1846, Erik Jansson and 400 of his followers, who had separated from the Swedish official church, established Bishop Hill. In 1851 the population numbered 1,100. Dissension and the national financial crisis of 1857 ended the colony in 1861. Property valued at over a half million dollars was divided among 415 shareholders, who scattered north and west over the Mississippi Valley. The village of Bishop Hill today numbers about 200 persons.

### VARIED CROPS OF MARION COUNTY

Three to four train loads of strawberries leave Marion County daily during the season. Two-million-dollar peach crops have been grown there. In an average year, 330,000 trees in Centralia Township alone yield 750,000 bushels of peaches. Large quantities of apples and pears, as well as potatoes, beans, tomatoes, and turnips contribute to the crop resources of the county.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### SCHOOL DAYS OF AN ILLINOIS SCHOLAR

Archives of the Downer's Grove Public Library preserve an interesting printed school program relating to the early career of the late James H. Breasted, a distinguished Illinois scholar, who at the time of his death in 1935 was director of the Oriental Institute and Professor Emeritus of Egyptology and Oriental History at the University of Chicago.

The program shows that among those taking part in the graduation exercises of the Downer's Grove Graded School in 1879 was the youthful Breasted, then fourteen years old and later a world famous authority on King "Tut" and the peoples along the Nile. He recited "The Soldier's Reprieve."

### "FIRST CALL FOR DINNER!"

When settlers came to Illinois in the 1820's, their food supply was soon more varied and abundant than pioneer conditions would seem to afford. Wild turkeys and deer were numerous on the prairies. Lakes and streams provided many kinds of fish. "Bee Trees" yielded "tubs" of honey, and camps for making sugar and syrup were set up in maple groves. Vegetables and small fruits added considerably to the variety of fresh foods. Corn, usually the first principal cultivated crop, showed up at meal times as bread, or "Johnny cake," mush, and hominy.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### GENEROSITY OF PIERRE MENARD RECALLED

An interesting story is told about the generosity of Pierre Menard, first Lieutenant-Governor of Illinois, during an acute salt shortage in the region around Kaskaskia. He owned the only available supply, and some of his distressed neighbors asked him for a portion of the salt. Menard, without giving a definite reply, told his callers to meet him at his store on an appointed day.

When the day arrived, Menard went among the men, asking each one of them: "You have money?" Some said they had. Others promised to pay as soon as they killed their hogs. Menard instructed all of them to divide into two groups -- those who had money on one side of the room, those who had none on the other. Naturally, the ones who had cash to pay for the salt fully expected to get it.

Menard surprised them. With typical brusqueness, he said: "You men who have money can go to St. Louis for your salt. These poor men who have no money shall have my salt."

### A CITY IN THREE COUNTIES

Wanac is the only Illinois city that is situated in three counties -- Washington, Marion, Clinton. Its name is coined from initial letters in the county names. At the election held July 5, 1913 on the question of incorporation, the late Mrs. O. W. Coleman is believed to have marked the first ballot cast by a woman in Illinois.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### HOW SOME PLACES IN ILLINOIS GOT THEIR NAMES

Origins of numerous place names in Illinois have been subjects of considerable study by students of the state's history. Blooming Grove in Hancock County was named, not from a grove nor from a profusion of blooms, but from a minister, a church, and an unknown quantity of nails. When in the early days of the community a few settlers decided to build a house of worship, the Rev. John Bailey offered to provide the nails required for the structure and asked only that he might name the place. His offer was accepted, and he named the settlement Blooming Grove in honor of his old home in Kentucky.

Chile in Hancock County got its name, not from any desire to do honor to the republic of Chile, but from the unrealized ambition of Stephen Owen, Sr., and his six sons to settle in South America. The Owen family got no further than this part of the state, where they settled in 1831, and the village that grew up there, as well as the township of which it is part, came to be known as Chile.

Pigeon Grove is the name of a township on Pigeon Creek in Iroquois County. At one time, it was merely a grazing district with a grove of shade trees, the refuge and roosting place for flocks of wild pigeons. Sight-seers came from miles around to watch the birds, which settled upon the trees in such incredible numbers that branches broke under the weight. All this was previous to 1855, when a pioneer purchased 1200 acres, laid out a farm, and erected buildings there. Stories are still told of the lack of sportsmanship on the part of hunters who made a practice of coming to the grove after nightfall, clubbing the helpless birds from their roosts, and driving away with wagon-loads of killed and crippled pigeons.





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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### ILLINOIS LIBRARY TRACES HISTORY TO 1836

Belleville, St. Clair County, claims to have the oldest public library in Illinois. It traces its history to July, 1836, when the German Library Society was founded. For many years Dr. Anton Schott, the first librarian and secretary of the organization, kept the collection of books in his own home. Members contributed three dollars a year for its support.

In 1883, the city council established a public library on the second floor of the city hall and the German Library Society transferred all of its books to those quarters. Later the library was moved to the Jackson Street Engine House. After a gift of \$45,000 by Andrew Carnegie, a new home was built and dedicated in 1916 as the "Carnegie Library." At present it has over 49,000 volumes.

### A NARROW STRIP OF LAND

An early Illinois deed conveyed a strip of land four inches wide and 132 feet long upon payment of the sum of one dollar. According to accounts, a resident of Bement, Piatt County, who in 1881 wished to build on a piece of property, found that he would be encroaching on the margin of the adjacent lot because of a survey said to have been inaccurately made years previously. As a result, the terms of transfer, it is believed, were arranged.

### WASH DAY A PICNIC

Sections of logs or stumps were used as washboards by pioneer women in Illinois, who often went to nearby streams to do the week's washing. In the early period of the state's history, it was the custom of housewives living in Pin Oak Township, Madison County, to gather on an appointed day at Silver Creek. Garments were pounded until clean, and then placed upon the grass or hung on limbs of trees to dry. A picnic lunch and swim completed the day.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### ONE MORE FISH STORY

Illinois, it seems, missed being a great salmon producing state by about 300,000 fish. According to a newspaper account of 1876 authorities had imported 286,000 lively salmon from native haunts in California streams and turned them loose in headwaters of the Kankakee. It was hoped that the newcomers would soon populate not only that river but also the Illinois and its tributaries.

Present-day Isaak Walton followers say this is news and are wondering just how so many fish left the state without being seen.

### HISTORIC ILLINOIS COURTHOUSE KEY

A key to an early Illinois courthouse remains as the only reminder of an incident long since forgotten. It is on display in a museum at Watseka, Iroquois County.

According to accounts, a pioneer charged with counterfeiting, who was placed in the old wooden structure in 1861 to await trial, escaped into the corridor during the night of February 25, 1862, when through an oversight his cell was left unlocked. Not knowing that the courthouse door had been recently lined with iron, he set fire to it, hoping to gain his freedom. The fire got out of control, however, trapped the prisoner, who lost his life, and burned the building completely.

The key to the cell door, which was in the possession of the jailer at the time of the fire, was preserved.



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## P i o n e e r   D a y s   i n   I l l i n o i s

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### SERVES THREE STATES AS U. S. SENATOR

The distinction of representing three different states as United States Senator was achieved by James Shields, who successively served in this capacity for Illinois, Missouri, and Minnesota. Highlights in the career of this soldier and statesman are being brought to the attention of students of Illinois history.

Shields settled in Kaskaskia in 1830, after duty as a lieutenant in the Seminole War. He taught school, studied law, and when only 24 years of age, became county prosecutor. In 1837 he was elected to the General Assembly. At the outbreak of the Mexican War, he was made Brigadier General and after being reported killed in a pitched battle at Cerro Gordo, he returned to Illinois to become one of the state's heroes. He was elected a senator from Illinois in 1849. At the end of his term, Shields moved to Minnesota Territory, and became one of the first two senators when the territory was admitted to statehood in 1858.

After serving in the Civil War as a Brigadier General and winning recognition for bravery at Winchester and Port Republic, he was promoted to the rank of Major General by Lincoln. At Carrolton, Missouri, his next home, he continued to be active in public affairs. In 1878 he became a senator from that state. He died at Ottumwa, Iowa, June 2, 1879.

### ON THE TRAIL OF HORSE THIEVES

Anti-horse thief associations were common in Illinois during pioneer days. Some of these vigilante groups developed into organizations with broader activities. The Macon County Farm Guard, which traces its early history to one of these associations, continues to have headquarters near Bearsdale, Macon County.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### ON THE ROAD TO ILLINOIS

Traveling 35 miles a day in a carriage from the eastern seaboard to Illinois was an experience long remembered in 1822. The Quincy Historical Society possesses the reminiscences of a pioneer woman, written for her children, describing carriage travel in those days.

She says the vehicle resembled a two-seated buggy, but points out that the word buggy was not in use when she made the trip. Each seat accommodated a trunk beneath it. Portmanteaus and bonnet boxes were somehow stored in front. Additional trunks rode in the rear. The passengers, with bamboo lunch baskets, overnight bags, and other necessary equipment piled around them, were jostled across a thousand miles of hot, dusty prairie.

### MORE WORK FOR HISTORIANS

In proof of a belief that Father Marquette once came up the Kankakee River a great oak tree was for a long time pointed out at Gougar's Grove, Kankakee. The Jesuit explorer and missionary with several companions, according to a supposedly legendary account, journeyed along the river in 1673, with the intention of converting the Potawatami Indians, and camped for the night under a great oak tree. Historical research workers have noted a report that the tree, believed to be between 250 and 300 years old, stood until November 7, 1934, and was for many years a center of attraction for tourists.





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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### MULE RACES IN ILLINOIS

Mule races as a comic relief to the customary horse races were sometimes feature attractions of early fairs in Illinois, and students of the state's history have found an amusing account of such a race held at the Dixon Fair in 1859.

After describing the raucous voices of the "long-eared coursers" at the starting pole, the newspaper reporter of that time goes on to say: "At the word, off they start, some under full gallop, some on a trot, others on a walk, while one or two plant their feet solidly in advance, at an angle of about 45 degrees, or fall upon their knees, much to the chagrin of the rider. . . . The gyrations and constant brayings of the more wilful of these animals brought down the house, and peal after peal of laughter shook the very clouds."

### DISTANT MARKETS FOR PRODUCE

First settlers in Clay County, Illinois, found themselves so far inland that they were handicapped in getting their produce to a market. They solved the difficulty by building flatboats on the Little Wabash River, in the 1820's and floating their bags of grain and barrels of pickled meat down the Ohio and the Mississippi to markets as far away as New Orleans.

### FIFTY CENTS A GALLON

Fifty cents was the average price for a gallon of liquor during the early 1850's, according to ledger accounts of a storekeeper a few miles south of Paxton, in Ford County. The records are among a number of early items displayed in the courthouse at Paxton.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### CORNEAL CAKES AND HUNGRY PIONEERS

Illinois pioneer women became expert at baking a variety of corneal cakes. Corn was used by most families as the principal ingredient of bread until land was improved for the growing of wheat. Some recipes found appetizing during those days are listed in A Guide for Emigrants, compiled in 1831 by John Mason Peck.

The "pone," according to this work, consisted of a large mass of meal which had been mixed either with milk or water and baked in an oven. Small loaves of bread similarly prepared in a skillet were known as "dodgers."

"The Yankees," wrote the author, "may tell of their pies, and dough-nuts and crulls, ginger-cake and bread -- whether made of rye or wheat -- and all their other 'rations' but give me the genuine hoe-cake for a substantial diet. It bids defiance to the dyspepsy."

"Hoe-cakes," said to have been originated by Virginians, were made by spreading a thin mixture of cornmeal over a hot iron plate, or on a board placed in front of the fire.

### SHOOTING ON THE RUN

Small game was so abundant in Illinois about the time of the Civil War that trainmen sometimes carried guns with them on their runs and combined business with pleasure by taking pot shots along the right of way. Engineer of one train broke his leg when, after shooting a quail, he stopped the engine, and in running to retrieve the bird, stepped into a hole. Some years later a conductor on another railroad, it is said, shot a quail with a pistol, but the record does not show that he bagged his game.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### ILLINOIS PIONEERS IMMORTALIZED

The Illinois pioneer family is immortalized in a great bronze monument at Elmwood, Peoria County. It is the work of the late Lorado Taft, renowned sculptor, whose parents were early settlers there. The statuary group called "The Pioneers" was dedicated to their memory, May 27, 1928.

Ten feet tall, on a four-ton granite base, the heroic size figures depict the ruggedness of early Illinois settlers who, according to the inscription, "bridged the streams, subdued the soil, founded a state," A man, musket in hand, is represented embracing his wife and child; and a dog, alert for approaching danger, crouches at his feet.

### WOMEN DRIVERS IN 1876

Women drivers drew criticism even back in the horse-and-buggy days of 1876. A writer in the Chicago Evening Journal of that time declares: "The way in which a lady driver will ride over you would be very amusing if it were not so dangerous. You step to the side of the street where she does not intend to go -- but by dexterous motion of the lines, she succeeds in bringing the horse's head over your left shoulder. Just as he takes a mouthful of your ear, on the principle that all flesh is grass, she screams, 'Wh-o-a!'" in a voice that sends him careening down the street, and gives you an impression of six different runaways; while she smiles sweetly, sits up straight and stretches her arms out over the dashboard, with an appearance of holding in that suggests any amount of reserved muscle. You might envy the scene from the top of a shot-tower.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### ILLINOIS FOLK CELEBRATE

Fresh facts for fresh eggs! You pay your eggs and get your newspaper! On Egg Day, May 25th of each year, eggs are used as the medium of exchange in buying many commodities in Bunker Hill, Macoupin County, Illinois. Even the local paper, the Gazette-Herald, has accepted eggs for the payment of subscriptions on that date. Egg Days as well as many other special and sometimes unusual occasions are observed each year by residents in the state.

A Baby Show, held yearly in Carbondale, Jackson County, features a parade in story book form for children under seven years of age. Dressed in gay costumes, they file past the judges' stand for prizes, some of which are awarded to the youngest entrants and to those tots best representing Hollywood "starlets."

Forreston, in Ogle County, holds a one-day festival in honor of "King Sauerkraut," although this town is not a sauerkraut center. It seems that a resident who visited a "kraut" festival in Iowa liked the occasion so well that he imported the idea to his home town. At the festival held last year, 1,200 pounds of frankfurters, 45 gallons of sauerkraut, 12,000 buns, and 1,000 loaves of bread were consumed by several thousand persons.

### BEAU BRUMMEL UMPIRES

Silk top hats and faultlessly pressed morning coats were worn by some Illinois umpires during the early days of baseball, fifty years ago, according to recollections of an early "fan." Large umbrellas for protection against sun were also included in their equipment.





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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### EARLY COW BROKERAGES

Operating cow brokerages was a profitable business in central and northern Illinois between 1840 and 1860. Newspaper files carry occasional stories concerning persons who contracted with residents of Chicago, Springfield, Peoria, and other cities and towns in the state, to furnish them with good milk cows.

Brokers would scour the counties adjoining the area in which they worked for the required number and breed of cows. These cows would be collected at some central place and then driven by herds into the city for which the broker had contracts.

### AN ILLINOIS CHILD WONDER

An Illinois lad who at the age of five years is said to have invented clocks and padlocks that were registered in the United States' patent office, seems to be worthy of a prominent place on the list of child wonders.

Newspaper records tell of such a child prodigy at Metamora during the time of the Civil War. While five-year-old compatriots were busily smashing their fathers' watches and the household clocks, this youngster finished making a clock that actually ticked. He then began to develop a new kind of padlock. However, the adult world was too much concerned with the progress of military events to take notice of his accomplishments.

Not until the boy's twelfth birthday in 1870 was public attention focussed on him. That year many of the Illinois newspapers carried stories concerning his remarkable abilities and some editorial writers hailed him as a genius. Research workers are wondering why no further reference to the boy has been found and why in not one of the newspapers consulted was the lad's name given, or that of his parents.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### THE GREAT SNOW OF 1831

Bitter gales whipping across frozen Illinois prairies and a curtain of snow lasting for almost six bleak months -- these are the high lights of the Great Snow of 1831.

The winter of 1830-31 went down in history as perhaps the most severe ever known in the state. Many counties, notably Macon, were almost totally submerged by gigantic snowdrifts which rose to housetops. Pioneer families, stranded in their homes, suffered from acute food shortage. Birds and wild animals starved by thousands and their carcasses dotted the white-blanketed fields.

Wolves, running easily over the snow crust, made short work of deer, which were trapped when their feet cut through the surface. To help these animals, Capt. David L. Allen, of Decatur, according to an account, provided a refuge in his cattle-pen, where he fed and protected many of them during the long winter siege.

So unusual was the Great Snow that early settlers looked upon it as a natural time mark for referring to both preceding and succeeding events.

### SEVEN BRICKS AND A PELICAN

No one, of course, would expect a pelican to be useful in the building trades, but an item in an early Illinois newspaper suggests that the web-footed bird might be a brick-layer's helper. In the Quincy Whig, of July 10, 1854, there is a report of the shooting by Thomas Crandol of a monster pelican at the head of a nearby slough. The bird measured seven feet ten inches from tip to tip. "The pouch," the reporter wrote, "was so large that Mr. Crandol, in order to test its capacity, put seven bricks in it."



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### A "BRAVE" BEAUTY CONTEST JUDGE

Beauty contests were known in Illinois as far back as 1857. One such event held during a celebration near Ottawa, La Salle County, on July 4 of that year for Indian maidens and squaws was the featured event of the day.

According to the story, an old Indian chief was given the task of acting as judge. After some deliberation, he made his choice. Stopping before a woman who weighed over 400 pounds and stood six feet tall in her moccasins, the chief placed his hand on her shoulder and proudly said, "Prettiest squaw!" She was his wife.

### WOMEN BICYCLE RACERS

Bicycle racing, especially popular among men of Illinois in the 1890's also interested women. In an era when feminine competition in sports was rare, a race held in 1894 becomes noteworthy.

On a Sunday in June, ten young women cyclists raced from Aurora to Elgin and return. The winner completed the round-trip of 42 miles in nine hours and twenty minutes. According to the Chicago Herald in its account of the race, "The best time previously made over the course was ten hours and forty minutes."



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### ILLINOIS GRIST MILLS

The grist mill was once the pivot of Illinois economic life. Famous mills, such as the Perkins and Alger mills in Tazewell County and McKingston's mill near Groveland, in Woodford County, have been the subjects of historical research.

As late as 1860, groups of early settlers would periodically fill their grist bags, tie them on the back of their saddles or on pack mules and proceed to the mill. The trip often occupied days and was one of the few occasions when the pioneer ventured to leave his home overnight.

Often horses that had carried their owners to mill would be requisitioned to help furnish power for the grinding. One settler wrote in his diary that he had been forced to leave his horse at the mill three days before the miller could grind his corn. Such conditions were particularly true at the McKingston, Ohio, and Panther Creek mills in Woodford County where there were no streams or rivers available for power. The McKingston mill is known to have served an area of more than fifty miles, and stories of farmers bringing produce from ninety miles away are not uncommon. Both the Perkins and Alger mills were water propelled since they were located on the Mackinaw River. Settlers could bring their wheat, rye, corn, oats, barley, and other grist to these mills by keel or flatboats.

### IMPORTED ICE FOR ILLINOIS

The unusually mild winter of 1875-76 brought very little ice on the Illinois, Mississippi, Sangamon, and other rivers, and ice companies were unable to stock their warehouses. In Cairo the shortage was felt as early as February, 1876, and distributors contracted for 1,000 cars to be shipped from Dubuque, Iowa. Other cities, including Chicago, were also forced to import ice.





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## P i o n e e r   D a y s   i n   I l l i n o i s

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### CLAIM TO OWNERSHIP OF ILLINOIS

Right of ownership to the greater portion of Illinois was asserted by an Iowan in 1878. This claim was based upon a deed reported to have been made out to the petitioner's great-great-grandfather and 19 others at Fort Gage, opposite the village of Kaskaskia, by ten Indian chiefs in 1773.

The Indians received, it was said, about two tons of gun-flints, cloth for breech-clouts, oxen, and other items in payment for the grant. Boundaries of the territory comprised one section lying above Cairo and embracing most of southern Illinois, and much of the western part of the state.

### A FIELD FULL OF WATCHES

Stories of the unearthing of fabulous treasures left by robber bands are among interesting items in the legendary lore in Illinois. Tales were commonly recounted as late as 1900.

One of these narratives printed in the Chicago Inter Ocean of April 22. 1895, tells of a farmer who lived near Fairbury, Livingston County. According to the story, one day as he followed his plow, he was astounded to see turned up dozens of silver watches, all of foreign make. The mechanisms had fallen to pieces but the valuable silver cases were well preserved.

Some elderly residents of nearby Pontiac, gave a degree of plausibility to the story by recollecting that a jewelry store at that place had been robbed thirty years before. The watches, they thought, could have been a part of the loot and cached in the field.



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## P i o n e e r   D a y s   i n   I l l i n o i s

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### ILLINOIS COUNTY BOUNDARIES

Water lanes play an important part in establishing natural boundaries for many of the 102 Illinois counties. Chief among these is the Mississippi River, which skirts the western borders of eighteen counties in its irregular southward course from Jo Daviess County in the northwest corner of the state to Alexander in the south.

The Illinois River ranks next, forming partial borders for sixteen counties, including many of those from Putnam and Bureau in the north central section of Illinois to Calhoun and Jersey in the southwest. In the southeast, the Ohio River describes the outer borders for six counties -- Gallatin, Hardin, Pope, Massac, Pulaski, and Alexander; likewise, the Wabash River, for Clark, Crawford, Lawrence, Wabash, White, and Gallatin. A contrasting feature is noted in the course of the Kaskaskia River, which traverses eleven counties from a central to southwest direction, but makes sections of border lines for only Monroe, St. Clair, Clinton, and Washington Counties.

Some other rivers marking portions of county lines are the Rock River for Henry, Whiteside, Rock Island, Ogle, and Lee counties; the Sangamon River for Macon, Christian, Sangamon, Cass, Menard, and Mason; the Cache River is the southern tip of the state for Alexander, Pulaski, and Johnson; the Big Muddy River for small portions of Union and Jackson counties; the Little Muddy River for Perry and Franklin; Salt Creek for Menard and Mason; and Macoupin Creek for Greene and Jersey counties.

Many Illinois counties have rectangular or squared boundaries, such as Boone, Stephenson, Iroquois, Macoupin, and De Kalb counties. Markedly irregular in appearance, others present a stepped profile, notably Cook, McLean, Will, Christian, Scott, Moultrie, and Woodford counties.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### A MUSICAL FISTIC ENCOUNTER

Prize fighters of today are sometimes accused of putting on "diving exhibitions," and wrestlers are said to achieve real drama with their grunt-and-groaning, but John Heenan and Jem Mace, two famous old-time pugilists, held the probably unique distinction of having attempted to appear before an Illinois audience as musical impresarios.

Billed as a "Grand Musical Festival" perhaps to get around the Illinois state law of that time forbidding boxing exhibitions, this Chicago event took place March 18, 1870, in the old Turner Hall, on Clark Street near Chicago Avenue.

Newspapers of the day treated the affair without the respect that either a sport event or musical presentation should command, and suggested that the audience, said to have been made up chiefly of "dubious men about town," were certainly not patrons of any art save that of loading with the left.

At any rate, the orchestral music with which the program opened was received with very little appreciation, the most favorable criticism heard being that of one distressed patron who wondered audibly "How can that Dutchman blow that horn so cussed long!" Verdi, it seems, was regarded chiefly as a necessary evil, to be endured but not enjoyed.

At the conclusion of the music, however, Heenan, in a dress suit, appeared to explain that the police did not regard a xylophone duet played on human ribs as music. The disappointed audience realized that the anticipated boxing bout was definitely "called off." Mace then appeared, in white tights, with face liberally powdered, and did a series of posturings, which Heenan explained as "Grecian statues." After that, presumably, everybody went home.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### BEARER OF OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

In 1852, an early Illinois resident was chosen to deliver important official documents to the American legations at Berlin and Vienna. For this mission, President Fillmore, it is related, appointed Francis A. Arenz, after whom the village of Arenzville, in Cass County, was named.

### WIDELY KNOWN BIRD HAVEN

Known to nature lovers both here and abroad, Bird Haven at Olney, Richland county, attracts thousands of visitors annually. Its 90-acre tract of land offers protection as a bird sanctuary and the advantages of an arboretum for the development and preservation of a large variety of trees and shrubs. Many of these are native to the State but others are uncommon species from abroad.

### LOTUS TIME IN ILLINOIS

Lotus flowers, rarely found except in Egypt and China, attract thousands of visitors annually to northeastern Illinois. There in the Fox River region of Lake county, quiet waters of Grass Lake form deep green backgrounds for extensive areas of remarkably beautiful cream-colored blooms, six to ten inches in diameter. The flowers, which are abundant under favorable conditions, ordinarily begin to appear early in August and remain nearly four weeks.





PART THREE

FROM FENCES TO DAN CUPID



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### CENTURY-OLD ILLINOIS FENCES

Unnoticed by many motorists, century-old fences still inclose more than a few Illinois fields and farms. Research workers, have found records of such fences in Iroquois, Edwards, Peoria, Tazewell, and other Illinois Counties.

Fences in pioneer days of Illinois were commonly constructed of trees, thorny bushes, sod, or rails. Picturesque osage orange tree hedges may still be seen. A model farm operated at Onarga for some years by the famous detective, Allan Pinkerton, following the close of the Civil War, was surrounded by an osage orange hedge within which grew larch trees seven rows deep. A white thorn hedge is said to inclose a farm in Edwards County.

No record has yet been discovered of sod fences remaining in any part of the state, although it is known that experiments in building these were carried on in Peoria County in 1839. They are said to have been usually unsatisfactory, as cattle enjoyed tossing the sod out of place with their horns. In this county examples of the zigzag rail type of fence may be seen.

Rail fences were not common in areas where other suitable and less costly fence materials could be found. Early settlers in Tazewell County, about 1837, had to be prepared to pay at least \$1.25 for a hundred rails, and sometimes more as the length of haul increased. To fence a "forty" in those days cost around "200.

### ON THE TRAIL OF GAME

Quest for "a hunter's paradise" led many early Illinois settlers to Franklin County. There skilled hunters found woods and streams abounding with deer, raccoons, mink, otter, beaver, and other animals. Buffalo still roamed the prairies. Today, rabbits, squirrels, raccoons and opossums are plentiful, but wolves, foxes, and mink have become rare.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### SOME 1852 ILLINOIS FOOD PRICES

Some early food prices prevailing in Illinois before the days of railroads have been noted by research workers. The following quotations are taken from price lists at Galesburg, in 1852: eggs, 10-12 $\frac{1}{2}$  cents per dozen; butter, 12 cents per pound; chickens and turkeys, 12 cents per pound; beef, 4-4 $\frac{1}{2}$  cents per pound; pork 8-9 cents per pound; and potatoes, 50 cents per bushel.

### ILLINOIS PLOWING CONTESTS

Plowing contests are held annually in several Illinois farming communities. It is said one such match took place in Wheatland Township, Will County, as far back as 1877. Big Rock, Kane County, adopted the custom in 1895. Contestants are judged for speed and skill in turning the soil into neat, even, open furrows. Hand and horse-drawn plows have rapidly given way to modern tractor-drawn gang plows. A radio-equipped tractor appeared for the first time in the Wheatland match in 1935. Unless postponed by rain, these events usually occur about the fourth Saturday of September.

### AN EARLY ILLINOIS BEVERAGE

A beverage popular with early Illinois settlers was known as "stew." The drink consisted of a mixture of water, sugar, whiskey, allspice, and butter served steaming hot. When pioneer schoolmasters followed the custom of celebrating the final day of the school term with parents of pupils, the oldest girl of the class was given the task of preparing the "stew." It is related that occasionally the instructors partook too freely of the potent beverage and became hilariously merry, or "stewed," in the parlance of the day.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### FAMOUS FOR HOSPITALITY

"It was the biggest thing between Chicago and the Mississippi!"

In these words, an old settler described the Pre-emption House in Naperville, Du Page County, for many decades one of the widely known hostelries of the Middle West, but now closed. It was built in 1834 at the junction of two important stage routes, one between Chicago and Galena, and other leading into Ottawa.

Members of Chicago's smart-set made this popular inn the scene of many social events during its heyday.

### ILLINOIS "EGYPTIAN TRAIL"

Illinois Highway 37, popularly called the "Egyptian Trail" because it leads from the north into the southern part of the state, which has long been known as "Egypt," is the most heavily traveled of the Illinois routes from Effingham to Cairo. Fertile farming communities and rolling prairie-lands comprise much of the scenery along this traffic artery. Large quantities of orchard fruits and strawberries are also grown in the areas traversed by it.

Counties through which Illinois 37 passes in its southward course are Effingham, Clay, Marion, Jefferson, Franklin, Williamson, Johnson, Pulaski, and Alexander. Some of the larger towns and cities along this famous highway are: Effingham, Salem, Mt. Vernon, Benton, West Frankfort, Johnston City, Marion, Mound City and Cairo.





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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### PIONEER DANCE CALLS

Picturesque titles, such as "Dip the Oyster," "Chase the Rabbit," and "Rip the Ring," still designate types of square dances in Adams County. Square dances in the smaller towns and villages of this area, as well as in other sections, are still popular, and types of dances and calls have changed little since pioneer times.

Music for the dance is usually supplied by a fiddler and a banjo player, often with a guitar player to help out. Callers are as important as the music, and are usually local people, who may or may not be paid for their performance.

The "half and half" dance is also quite popular, the dances in the course of the evening being half square dances and half the more modern waltzes, fox trots, and others. Both young and old, however, still meet to "dip that oyster --- now the stew --- and pull that oyster right on through" until early in the morning.

### TOO MUCH NOISE

"Infernal" is just one of the epithets once used by citizens of Rock Island to describe their water works whistle, according to a newspaper account of a protest entered against the noise maker in September, 1872. They seem to have had just cause for a grievance, since it is reported that the whistle was sounded five times a day, often for prolonged periods, and could be heard by residents of a town twenty-five miles away. No further record of the protest has been found.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### BRINGING CULTURE TO THE WORM

Culture of the lowly worm has become an enterprise of national scope for one Illinois business house. Located in Joliet, this company has for many years made a scientific study of cultivating meal-worms, the standard diet of fish, reptiles, and birds in zoos, parks, and private collections.

### TAXES ON BATH TUBS

Bath tubs were considered luxuries in many Illinois communities more than 50 years ago. For some time in Moline, public bath tubs were taxed \$8 a year, those in hotels and boarding houses \$4, and private ones \$3 as a means of obtaining water-assessments.

### FUR HATS FOR SUMMER WEAR

Illinois Indian chiefs sometimes wore heavy fur hats, given them by early settlers, even during the warm months. It is said that at the conclusion of the Treaty of Prairie du Chien with the Potawatomes, Chippewas, and Ottawas on July 29, 1829, fur hats and ruffled calico shirts were among items of merchandise taken by Indians in exchange for land. Donning these, the chiefs proudly strolled among their tribesmen under an August sun.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### EXCITING CONFLICT OF OPINION

The English farmer who was considering emigrating to Illinois a century ago must have been puzzled by conflicting reports of English travelers in this region. Some amusing contradictions may be noted in early letters.

In Pictures of Illinois 100 Years Ago, a compilation edited by Milo Milton Quaife, the vast prairie was described as an agricultural Utopia offering a scenic beauty of exceptional grandeur. William Cobbett, in A Year's Residence in U.S. of America, added to the glamorous accounts, and Morris Birkbeck, who left a prosperous farm in England to buy 10,000 acres in Illinois, sent such rapturous reports in Letters from Illinois, that he succeeded in establishing a colony of over three hundred families in Edwards County. Such statements as the following influenced the hagra:

"For about half the capital required for the mere cultivation of the worn out soil in England, a man may establish himself as a proprietor here, with every comfort -- a reasonable mode of living, and with a certainty of establishing his children as well or better than himself. I love this country....we are not called upon to refund a portion for rents, another for title, a third for poor's rates, and a fourth for taxes."

An indignant contemporary writer, C. H. Wilson, in The Wanderer in America or Truth at Home, gave his opinion of Birkbeck as an unscrupulous literary land agent who lured fellow countrymen to a false land of promise where they met with every conceivable hardship and disappointment. He called him "an unblushing yea and nay adventurer," and his followers "lunatics."

Wilson's accusations were confirmed by later reports of William Cobbett which were in decided contrast to his former



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accounts. He told of severe drouths and other adverse conditions, to all of which Birkbeck published a denial.

The result of these controversies appears to have been the failure of the English settlement in Illinois as there are very few descendants of these people living today in the region. Even the children of Birkbeck moved away after he died. This is to be regretted, as the colony was cultured and admirable in many respects.





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### AN EARLY ILLINOIS "CATTLE KING"

Believed to have been the first to demonstrate the possibilities of Illinois as a livestock State, Jacob Strawn, known as the "Cattle King" of Morgan County in pioneer days, is said to have provided all the stock necessary to supply St. Louis with beef from 1835 to 1850. According to early accounts, on one occasion for nearly two weeks he stationed buyers on all roads leading into St. Louis to purchase every steer, calf, or cow being driven into the city, in order to maintain his leading position in the livestock market.

### A PUGILISTIC EVENT OF 1858

Accounts of a professional prize fight held in 1858 on board a Mississippi River excursion boat, the Equinox, near Alton, Illinois, have come to the attention of historical research workers.

At this early pugilistic encounter, said to have attracted more than 400 persons, ringside odds favored Charles Holmes of Ireland, who opposed Jack Cope of England. Reports show that the match was a "winner-take-all" affair, with \$200 posted by each side.

Before beginning to swing rights and lefts, the two men bowed politely to each other in the center of the ring. They then fought for 62 rounds, amid wild cheers. Cope, it was declared, then fouled Holmes, to whom the referee awarded the decision.

The many women on the boat, instead of watching the prize fight, danced a cotillion.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### IMMIGRANT CARS IN ILLINOIS

Less than 50 years have passed since immigrant cars were commonly seen at railroad stations in Illinois. They were generally first-class passenger cars of older types, or box cars, partitioned and provided with stoves if whole families and household goods were being moved.

That this kind of equipment proved to be profitable seems likely because of agitation by steamboat interests to promote immigration by way of the Mississippi River route as early as 1875. In March of the following year, states served by that waterway discussed the matter in convention. Illinois was especially interested because of its need for laborers and increased revenue for the Illinois-Michigan Canal.

It is doubtful, however, if river steamers offered serious competition in this respect to railroads, at least so far as Illinois was concerned, since the remarkably large number of immigrants who entered the state between 1870 and 1885 seems to have provided plenty of business for all. In one year, about three-fourths of real estate transfers in Madison County alone were made because of immigrant purchases.

Before 1890, the immigrant car began to decline in importance. Immigration restrictions were being extended. In 1892, for example, Illinois required health certificates from immigrants, and railroads in a way became responsible for the health of their passengers, since any one who did not have a certificate, was held in quarantine at the expense of the road.

By 1895, immigrant cars were becoming "white elephants." On March 20 of that year, an item in the Chicago Times-Herald showed that they had definitely reached the period when they had lost their importance: "Immigration has fallen off to such an extent that many of the roads are selling their immigrant cars or converting them into another kind. In two years immigration has fallen off about 60 per cent, and it is believed it will never again assume its old importance."



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### ONE NAME AFTER ANOTHER

That portion of Illinois now called La Salle County was included in a number of separately named areas before it was finally organized under its present name in 1831. The land became a part of the following counties at different times: Knox in 1790, Randolph in 1801, Madison in 1812, Edwards in 1815, Crawford in 1816, and Clark in 1819. When Clark County was divided in 1821 a part of the present La Salle County lay in Pike County and a part in Fayette.

### WHEN AN INDUSTRY DECLINES

Located a few miles northeast of Rushville in Schuyler County is the hamlet of Ray, which until recent years was a prosperous community maintained solely by the manufacture of brick and tile. With the use of shale brick, the industry declined. Hundreds were thrown out of work and most of the population had to seek employment elsewhere. The few remaining inhabitants, about 50 in number, are engaged principally in small-scale farming.

### AN EARLY ILLINOIS JOURNEY

Twenty-one days and nights were required by an early Illinois settler in making a trip from Champaign to Chicago in 1834. It is said no bridges existed along his route during those days, and rivers had to be forded. A similar journey between these two points, 134 miles apart, today takes less than four hours by automobile.



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### HISTORIC INN A FARM HOME

A widely known stopping place for passengers of stage coaches in Illinois during early days, the stone built Lisbon House, now a farm home, may still be seen on the old Ottawa Pike near Lisbon, Kendall County. This historic inn, a noteworthy example of early American design, maintained twelve guest rooms and a bar room that used all the basement space except a section for baking ovens. A barn that could accommodate 100 horses, a smithy, and quarters for hostlers, are no longer standing.

### ABOUT TIME AND TREES

Two trees, one an eighty-foot giant, the other a small seedling, are reported to be the sole survivors in Lawrence County of the fine bald cypress groves once commonly to be seen in southern Illinois.

The specimens grow in a boggy creek bottom in the northwest section of the County, it is reported. Roots of the parent tree, which has a circumference of twelve feet, have become enmeshed over an extensive area of the surrounding land. The seedling has attained a height of 20 feet.

Another species of tree, the large tooth aspen, once likewise commonly found in this part of the state, is now almost extinct in Lawrence County. Only a few on a rise south of Indian Creek are reported to exist. Willows, especially the peach leaf variety, also seem to be dying out. Lawrence still has many beech trees but Richland, which adjoins it, is said to have but one in its entire area.





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### RIGHT OF WAY FOR HORSES

In 1903, an act passed by the Illinois state legislature required automobiles to come to a full stop upon nearing any horse-drawn vehicle. This law was enacted as a safeguard against accidents known to have occurred when horses became frightened by the approach of motor cars. The speed of automobiles was limited to 15 miles per hour in those days.

### THREE OF A KIND

"Winner names the town," may have been the opening remark of a prairie poker game, said to have been played in Illinois some years ago to determine who would have the honor of naming Mattoon, in Coles County.

The story goes that at the time a railroad was being built through this part of Illinois, in 1850-52, three men met to discuss plans for founding a town that would be shipping point for the rich agricultural area. One of them, it is related, was William Mattoon, supervisor of construction. They agreed to play a hand of poker to determine who would have the honor of naming the community.

Mattoon, it is said, won the game and then announced: "This thriving and beautiful metropolis of Coles County shall be called Mattoon."



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### THREE COVERED BRIDGES

Contrary to common belief, the East and the South by no means have a "corner" on the country's supply of those old landmarks -- covered bridges. These structures are to be found spanning a number of Illinois streams. Among those frequently commented upon by tourists are the Jack's Mill bridge near O-quawka in Henderson County; a bridge at the site of the "ghost town" of Conkeytown in Vermilion County, and one over the Spoon River in Stark County.

### "OLD STONE FACE" IN ILLINOIS

Overlooking the Saline River Valley, the "Old Stone Face," near Somerset in Saline County, attracts many visitors to southern Illinois annually. This unusual stone formation on a ridge of the Illinois Ozarks is believed to have been first noted in 1915. Close by is another point of interest, Still House Hollow, which, according to local tradition, was the site of a liquor still years ago.

### HAPPY DAYS ON FIFTY LAKES

Among the popular summer resort areas in Illinois is the Chain-o-Lakes region in McHenry and Lake counties, where more than fifty lakes with swimming, fishing, and other recreational features lure thousands of visitors each year. Antioch, Fox Lake, and Lake Villa form the hub of this widely-known playground.



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### PLANK ROADS IN ILLINOIS

Plank roads played an important part in the story of transportation, during the early days of the development of Illinois. In 1849, a company organized in Will County built a wooden highway from Oswego, in Kendall County, to the Indiana State Line by way of Joliet. Stock found ready buyers. At this time the Illinois legislature passed an Act stating, in part:

"Every plank road made by virtue of this Act shall be so constructed as to make a secure and permanent road, the track of which shall be made of plank, and in such a manner as to permit wagons and other vehicles conveniently and easily to pass on and off where such roads are intersected by other roads. . ."

Many other companies were formed. Advertisements pictured plank roads as the "farmer's road" and the "poor man's road." In 1851, it is said, 600 miles of such travel lanes had been built in Illinois. One widely known highway, called South-western Plank Road, ran from Chicago to Elgin. According to early accounts, tolls collected on this road during the first six months paid expenses and dividends amounting to 42 per cent of the money originally invested.

### GOOD START FOR A LAD

Old Glory had a namesake in Illinois at least as far back as 1870. The census of that year lists a boy living at Rockford, whose Christian name was "Star Spangled Banner." He and his patriotic parents lived in Rockford's Third Ward.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### SOME 1838 POSTAGE RATES

Mailing a letter in Illinois a century ago cost considerably more than it does today. In 1838, according to one account, the Frink and Wallace Stage Line, with a route from Peoria through Kickapoo, Brimfield, French Grove, and points westward, charged 25 cents postage for letters mailed over 300 miles, and about 18 cents for distances under this mileage. Fees were collected after the letters had been delivered.

### LOCATING A COUNTY SEAT

In the early days, the geographical center of an Illinois county was sometimes found without the use of precise surveying instruments. It is said that at the time the center of Henry County, named for the famous American statesman, Patrick Henry, was first determined for the purpose of establishing the county seat there, one of its citizens followed his compass and counted the footsteps of his horse as he rode. Arriving thus at the point that he considered to be the true center of the county, he selected it for the place of local government and named it Richmond. However, a subsequent survey showed that he missed the exact center by a mile too far west and a short distance too far north. Later, the county seat was moved to Morristown and again to Cambridge.





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### FAMOUS COURT HOUSE CAT

Legend regarding Decatur's most famous feline, the Court House Cat, has attracted the attention of research workers in folklore. She arrived in 1903 at the Macon County Court House, a forlorn and scrawny kitty. However, as time went on, she became accustomed to the legal atmosphere, made new friends, and grew sleek and fat on regular meals.

According to accounts, her absence on the marble stairs, just outside the court room was regarded as an omen of ill fortune to a defendant, and in many cases, it is reported, the prediction was borne out.

The Court House Cat frequently took time off to rear families, the members of which apparently were all good mousers and in great demand. It is said that after the four-year period of the cat's residence, the court house was completely free of mice.

### PLENTY OF WORK

A citizen of Victoria, Knox County, believed that he had solved a difficult community problem in 1877. He proposed to employ on farms throughout the state all women in the care of social agencies. Plenty of farmers, he said, would be willing to pay from \$2 to \$3 per week for their help with the housework, the family baking, washing, and other farm tasks. He felt it his duty to add, however, that the girl should be allowed time enough to do her own mending and laundry work.



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### A HISTORIC STATE LANDMARK

In 1821, when sectional boundary lines were being established between Illinois and Indiana, from the Wabash River to Lake Michigan, a stone marker was placed on the north bank of the river, near Wabash Township, Clark County, at a cost of about \$100. Inscribed on its west face was the word, "Illinois"; on its east face, "Indiana"; and on the north, "159 miles and 46 chains to Lake Michigan."

This landmark soon became known throughout the environs as a popular meeting-place for the settlement of local disputes. According to traditions, it was customary in those days to charter a steamboat to transport fight fans to the famous boundary, where, if the authorities of one state threatened to stop the contest, both spectators and participants moved across the line into the other state.

After a number of years, the stone landmark sunk into the ground out of view, and was recovered in 1929 by the State of Illinois. A concrete base now supports the marker.

### HOW MARION COUNTY WAS NAMED

Marion County in Illinois was so named as result of a bill introduced in the legislature January 24, 1823, by Zadoc Casey whose father had fought under General Francis Marion in the Revolution. Its county seat, Salem, was named after Salem, Indiana, where Mark Tully, one of the donors of the land on which the court house was erected, had stopped enroute to the Illinois country.



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## P i o n e e r   D a y s   i n   I l l i n o i s

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### TOO MANY MOUNDS

So much confusion resulted from the similarity in names of two Illinois communities, Mounds Station, Brown County, and Mounds, Pulaski County, that residents of the first place changed its name in 1908 to Timewell. The new name honored O. C. Timewell, a railroad chief clerk.

### SHOPPING IN THE SHADE

When residents of Greenup in Cumberland County go shopping on a hot day, they can enjoy the shade of "Holland" porches, which extend over the sidewalk to the curb. This once common feature of village stores in Illinois is rapidly disappearing.

### MILLSTONES FOR A MONUMENT

Unique among memorials to honor early settlers in Illinois is the Edgar County Pioneer Monument, which consists of two complete millstones. It occupies a prominent position on the south lawn of the courthouse at Paris. The two stones, donated by descendants of pioneer families, were in service as early as 1817.



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### HIGH AND LOW IN ILLINOIS

Illinois, it seems, is often thought of as a state principally with wide expanses of almost level farm land, river shores, and city and town sites. This mistaken view is perhaps due largely to its nickname, "Prairie State." However, persons well acquainted with its topography know that it seldom presents a monotonous regularity. Widely separated sections marked by precipitous cliffs and hills, occasionally approach mountain size.

Illinois which lies in the Prairie Plains region, has an average elevation of about 575 feet. The highest point, Charles Mound, 1,241 feet above sea level, dominates the scene in Jo Daviess County less than a mile from the Wisconsin line. The lowest point, 268 feet above sea level, coincides with low water mark at the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers at Cairo -- a variation of 973 feet in the state's topography.

The Ozark Plateau, or "Illinois Ozarks," extends approximately across the southern part of the state from Grand Tower, Jackson County on the Mississippi, to Gallatin County, bordering the Ohio, and its highest point, Williams Hill, in Pope County, reaches 1,065 feet.

Another important elevation begins at Grand Tower, parallels the Mississippi, and ends at the mouth of the Illinois River; still another stretches along the Wabash. In these areas many river bluffs rise to lofty heights. Starved Rock, near Ottawa in La Salle County, is 150 feet above the bed of the Illinois. Less abrupt slopes bordering watercourses enclose numerous valleys named after their respective rivers.





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### A CREEK IN REVERSE

Post Creek, a small tributary of Cache River traversing Pulaski County, has coursed backward since 1912. In that year the Cache Drainage Commission, in order to clear the swamp lands of the county, dredged the creek and cut a channel through the hills along the Ohio River. This work changed the current of the waters, and the creek instead of running into the Cache, now empties into the Ohio,

### "POOR MAN'S PORK"

The demand for certain cuts of pork was so small in Illinois during pioneer days that they were considered without sale value. According to one account, almost limitless quantities of spare-ribs, pigs feet, and pigs heads could be procured free for the family table,

### THREE STRIKES BUT NOT OUT

Palestine, Illinois, had good reason to worry about its courthouse during the years that it was the county seat of Crawford County. The first courthouse, erected in Palestine in 1820, was struck by lightning three times during the next few years. The final bolt practically destroyed it. A second courthouse, completed in 1830, was gutted by fire the night before it was to be taken over by the court. A third courthouse was completed in 1833, and used until 1843, when the county seat was moved to Robinson.



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### WORLD WAR TANK IN PEORIA

On the American Legion grounds in Peoria stands a camouflaged, bullet-scarred tank which saw service in several battles in France, among them "the great tank drive" and the second battle of the Somme during the World War of 1914-1918. It is 20 feet long, 8 feet wide, 7 feet high, and weighs more than 32 tons.

In service, this monster was heavily armed. Its equipment consisted of a one-pound cannon mounted in the nose and four machine guns to guard sides and rear. The guns sent deadly sprays of bullets from portholes in the turret. A self-destroyer bomb could wreck the engine in case of capture. A six-cylinder engine moved the fortress at a speed of 6-1/2 miles per hour.

The tank, built in Coventry, England, is said to be the only one of its kind on this side of the Atlantic.

### GREAT TOWERS FOR EARLY ARC LAMPS

Shortly after the commercial dynamo was perfected in 1882, one of the first cities in Illinois to use electricity for street lighting was Decatur. Eight fabricated steel towers, 125 feet high, resembling the familiar radio towers of today, were set up at various points in the city. In a cage at the top of each, five carbon arc lamps gave such a powerful illumination that persons driving toward the city at night were harrassed by its brilliance,



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These lamps lighted most of the streets and served as beacons to travelers for over a decade. By 1895, more than a hundred smaller lights had been installed closer to the ground at street intersections. The great towers soon became obsolete, but remained until 1910. Their removal did away with a hazardous challenge to ambitious youths, who frequently sought to show their courage by climbing them.

### MAMMOTH KETTLE NOW A MONUMENT

One of the eighty great iron kettles used a century ago to boil down brine from the famous Vermilion salines in the commercial production of salt now stands, five miles west of Danville on U. S. Highway 50, as a monument to a once important Illinois industry. It was placed there through the interest of the Governor Bradford chapter of the D.A.R.

The eighty mammoth kettles, each large enough to hold two barrels of brine, were brought by boat and ox-cart from Louisville for the salt works of Major John W. Vance, which were profitably operated by him from 1824 to 1831 at the salt springs discovered in 1819 by Joseph Barron.

A few of the remaining kettles are used as water tanks in nearby farmyards and maple groves. The furrows on a hillside where rearing fires heated the immense containers may still be seen, but stones that formed the fireplaces have been carted away for other uses.



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### GRANITE SHAFT MARKS SITE OF FORT EDWARDS

From a bluff almost 100 feet over the Mississippi, at Warsaw, Hancock County, a white granite shaft, reaching 50 feet toward the sky, now reminds visitors that the quiet valleys below held unknown terrors to the pioneers living within the shadows of Fort Edwards. The only remains of this stronghold are logs from the officers' quarters, now being used for a granary in Warsaw.

The Fort was built in 1814 under the direction of Zachary Taylor, then a major in the army. Its site was already a pioneer and trading outpost, just emerging from the War of 1812. Ninian Edwards was governor of the Illinois Territory. Troops were stationed at the fort until 1824, and again during the Black Hawk War in 1832. The monument, an obelisk, was dedicated a hundred years after the building of the fort. On its base are bronze bas-reliefs of Zachary Taylor, Ninian Edwards, and the Fort.

### RECORDS OF PLANT LIFE IN SHALE ROCK

Clear impressions of early plant life are preserved in extensive deposits of shale rock in the Mazon, Carkuff, and other fossil beds in Grundy County. Many of these fossil remains may be picked up from the surface in the form of small stones commonly about the size of goose eggs. When these are cracked open, they reveal stratifications between which are traces of earlier plant life. Some fossils give evidence of carbon, salts of iron, and other plant minerals.





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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### KEEPING A DIME BUSY

During the panic of 1837, Illinois settlers, because of a scarcity of money, often used farm products as a medium of exchange. Cash, however, was required for some services and the lack of it caused difficulties.

A woman resident of Sparland, in Marshall County, made a trip by ferry to Lacon, across the Illinois River, paying her fare with a dime taken from her small supply of cash. After completing her shopping she returned to the boat landing, where she discovered that all of her money had been spent. Returning to the store where she traded, she sought the loan of a dime. The proprietor, finding himself without "hard" money, succeeded in borrowing the amount.

When the woman presented the coin to the ferryman, he was amazed to recognize it as the same dime that she had given him earlier in the day.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### SOME MUSEUMS IN ILLINOIS

Of the 1400 museums on record for the United States, 61 are in Illinois. Most of them are housed in public libraries and in university, college, and school buildings. A considerable revival of interest in these collections is expected as a result of centennial celebrations of the founding of Illinois cities and towns, a number of which have already been held.

Among the museums in Illinois, outside of Chicago, several are known for more than one type of collection. In Bloomington for example, the Powell Museum of the Illinois Wesleyan University is especially noteworthy for the Vasey Collection of ornamental and useful wood, and the Smith Collection of Civil War relics. The Albert Hurd Museum at Knox College in Galesburg is known particularly for exhibits of algae of the United States and New Zealand and Illinois wild flowers.

At the University of Illinois, the Oriental Museum and the Museum of Classical Archeology and Art have unusually important collections. The Page Museum of the Illinois State Teachers' College at DeKalb emphasizes materials to show historic processes and fundamental historic movements.

At perhaps no other time in the history of the state have residents been as conscious as they now are of the importance of museums and the significance of the research work of historical societies.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### STARS AND STRIPES OVER ILLINOIS

The first time that the Stars and Stripes flew over any of the area that is now Illinois may have been June 24, 1778, when George Rogers Clark with 150 men entered Illinois territory and encamped near Fort Massac, now the site of a state park. From that point the company moved northwest, a few days later, to take Fort Kaskaskia from the English on July 4. Since Clark had the flag with him at Kaskaskia, it seems probable that when he was at Fort Massac, he unfurled the American flag for the first time over Illinois soil.

### EARLY EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Cahokia, in St. Clair County, has claimed the distinction of establishing the first public school in the Illinois country. Its right to this honor is based on a French document, dated May 6, 1764, wherein the citizens requested "the judges of the honorable court of Cahokia" to permit them to use the courthouse for public school purposes.

The first institution of learning of any sort within the present boundaries of the State was probably a seminary established by the early French at Kaskaskia, Randolph County, in 1721. Its influence seems to have been much restricted by the poverty of the settlers and the widely scattered early settlements.





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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### PRESIDENTS AND COUNTY NAMES

Out of 102 Illinois counties only six are named for presidents of the nation: Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and Jackson. Douglas County, organized in 1859, was named after Stephen A. Douglas, but Lincoln, the most famous name in Illinois history, is not included.

### SURPRISED COAL MINERS

Coal miners beneath an Illinois graveyard abruptly left their tasks on one occasion. The mine extended under a cemetery south of the Wabash Railroad bridge, in Danville, Vermilion County, much to the dislike of the citizens. One day a coffin fell through the roof into the mine tunnel, whereupon many of the miners, badly frightened, promptly quit.

### EARLY PRICES AND WAGES

Eggs a nickel a dozen, and butter at seven cents a pound were enjoyed by early settlers in Illinois. In the area now called Tinley Park, Cook County, during 1840-50 corn brought 18¢ a bushel, and wheat prices ranged from 50¢ to \$1 a bushel. Land could be bought from the government for \$1.25 an acre, and one account tells of 40 acres being purchased in 1864 for \$2.75. However, while prices were low, wages were also low. A farm hand received \$150 a year plus board and room, and a day laborer commonly made only 50 cents in a twelve-hour day.



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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### SWIMMING TO A PATIENT

Peggy Logsdon, a physician and pioneer resident, occupies a unique place in the early annals of southern Illinois. Dr. Logsdon practiced in Kentucky, across the Ohio River, as well as in Gallatin County. She could hear calls from across the river in her home on Sandy Ridge, immediately south of Shawneetown.

On one occasion as she set out to respond to a call from the Kentucky shore, she discovered her rowboat missing from its mooring. Using a fallen tree as a raft, on a branch of which hung her clothes, she swam to the Kentucky shore.

### MAIL OUT OF A HAT

When Daniel McNeil, Jr., first postmaster of Monmouth, Illinois, doffed his tall hat to fellow townsmen in the 1830s, he was not merely being courteous, and the eager manner of those whom he favored with this conventional gesture did not mean that they were especially pleased at receiving this attention. Their actions meant that McNeil was about to hand them the day's mail, for Monmouth, like other Illinois frontier towns, maintained its postoffice in the postmaster's "stovepipe" hat.

During eleven years in office, McNeil delivered letters and newspapers to the persons for whom they were intended when he happened to meet them on the streets, and after they had paid the postage fee. Between mails he found time to serve as president of the first Board of Trustees, county clerk, circuit clerk, recorder, and probate judge.

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## Pioneer Days in Illinois

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### TERROR FROM THE SKY

A brilliant meteoric display accompanied by earthquake-like rumblings alarmed the residents of many Illinois towns sixty-four years ago. The fall of a heavenly body of considerable magnitude was reported from such widely separated sections as Lincoln, Mendota, Bloomington, Peoria, and El Paso.

An Account from Lincoln, in Logan County, stated, "A remarkable meteor passed over this city, a few minutes before 9 p.m., accompanied by an explosion which shook the earth and a rumbling like a train of cars. A succession of flashes were seen in the southwest and it was as light as day for half a minute. Then the meteor seemed to fall in about twenty fragments in the northeast. The explosions came about two minutes after the flashes."

### MORE ABOUT DAN CUPID

The scarcity of marriageable young women in pioneer Illinois towns and villages sometimes resulted in the practice of "courtship-through-the mails." It is said that years ago, when Freeport, Stephenson County, was still in its infancy, a man wishing to obtain a wife wrote letters proposing marriage to two different girls of his acquaintance at the same time. In great detail, he described himself and his character, his log cabin, and other worldly possessions.

By coincidence, the girls were friends, and they decided to teach the would-be groom a lasting lesson in romance. Replying to him in a single letter that each of them signed, one girl demanded constancy, and the other love. The tactless suitor was, of course, rejected.













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